



Mishawaka Communicator



Working together to build the "Best Hometown in America" by delivering exceptional services, promoting safe and clean neighborhoods, elevating the quality of life, and inspiring pride in our community.

Dave Wood, Mayor

www.mishawaka.in.gov

March 2015

A Letter from Mayor Dave Wood



About this time every year, we pause, look back over the previous year and take measure of the progress, the trends and the issues impacting the Princess City, her government and her people. Most years, we quietly move forward, complete projects and make decisions that each and of themselves seem inconsequential but when added together, are impressive, especially given the size of our city government. Frankly, I'm always impressed at what is accomplished year after year. But we are not here to mark time, we are here to make a difference. This past year we made a difference. As we take stock of 2014, it felt like a year that we took on a lot... and we accomplished a lot.

The theme I have chosen for this year's State of the City Address is "Mishawaka Strong". In my opinion, strong is the adjective that best summarizes the intent behind our continued actions, decisions, and successes. Fundamentally, we are a well-built City, on a solid foundation with strong leadership to protect ourselves from outside influences. I encourage you to read the entire version by logging onto our City's website at: mishawaka.in.gov.

- Mishawaka is strong because we are fiscally responsible.
- Mishawaka is strong because it is safe.
- Mishawaka is strong because we maintain an environment that promotes business and job growth.
- Mishawaka is strong because of our continual strategic investments in public infrastructure.
- Mishawaka is strong because we strive to provide world-class service to our citizens.
- Mishawaka is strong because we have strong, cohesive neighborhoods.

I'm pleased to report that the current state of our City government continues to be fiscally stable, lean, and efficient. Mishawaka passed another honestly balanced budget for 2015 that provides investment in public safety, streets and parks.

Highlights for this past year include...

Overall Crime Rate Down by 10% - As Mayor, one of the accomplishments that I am most proud of is the fact that overall crime numbers have decreased consistently in my tenure. Although

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Colorectal Cancer: Are You At Risk?

Health Information from Saint Joseph Regional Medical Center

March is National Colon Cancer Awareness Month, and many don't know that colorectal cancer screenings could save thousands of lives.

Colorectal cancer is the third-most commonly diagnosed cancer and the second leading cause of cancer-related deaths in the U.S. Last year there were more than 50,000 deaths in the U.S. from colorectal cancer, and more than 136,000 new cases diagnosed.

Risk factors for colorectal cancer include:

- ◊ A parent, sibling or offspring who has had colorectal cancer
- ◊ A history of colorectal cancer
- ◊ Physical inactivity
- ◊ Using tobacco products and consuming alcohol

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UPCOMING EVENTS!

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| Apr 11 | Dances for a Festive Night
(Battell Center) |
| Apr 12 | Michiana Concert Band Spring Concert
(Battell Center) |
| Apr 29 | Youth Classes' Showcase
(Battell Center) |
| May 16 | Relay For Life
(Mishawaka HS) |
| Jun 26-27 | Summerfest 2015 |

Summerfest 5K Race

Download a registration form at
<http://mishawaka.in.gov/summerfest>

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance

IRS-certified VITA tax preparers will prepare and e-file your taxes for FREE!
CALL 2-1-1 to schedule your appointment or schedule online at
www.uwsjc.org/vita.html

ONLINE ACCESS

The City of Mishawaka maintains an online presence and can be found on the web at <http://mishawaka.in.gov>.

Find us on Facebook at
<http://facebook.com/cityofmishawaka>

Remember, the current issue of the Mishawaka Communicator is always available as of the 1st of every month at
<http://mishawaka.in.gov/communicator>

A Letter from Mayor Dave Wood *(continued)*

there are many factors that can contribute to this, the most impressive is the everyday work and accomplishments of our Mishawaka Police Department. Our Police Department has always had a plain, old-fashioned hard work ethic, yet they continue to do an outstanding job evolving with the ever-changing technologies and criminal mindset of today's world. Our drop in the crime rate is even more impressive when you think of our City's continued expansion and the constant influx of daily visitors to the largest retail shopping area in the region.

City Assessed Valuation Up For First Time Since 2007 - In 2007 the City's assessed valuation reached a peak of \$1.750 billion. Since then, as part of the Great Recession, the Princess City has weathered an overall 25.6% decrease in assessed valuation. This coupled with the Circuit Breaker caps resulted in the perfect storm that has caused the City, schools and other taxing units to provide essential services with much less revenue. In 2015, the City's AV increased 5.28% to \$1.372 billion. While it may not seem like much, it halts the downward trend and will potentially allow the City to build up a portion of our cash reserves that have been eroded over the past seven years.

Insurance Costs Down \$1.9 Million - After four consecutive years of health insurance increases totaling 50.5% the City changed our insurance and once again became self-insured in 2014. This move left employee's benefits unchanged and resulted in a savings of \$1.9 million dollars or a 16.9% reduction from the previous year. I can't overstate the significance of these savings given our declining revenues in other areas. Rising insurance costs and employee wellness are two factors that significantly impact the City's financial health. We continue to monitor both, and look for ways to reduce costs while providing affordable health care for our employees.

We Will Do "Less with Less" - With further revenue reductions looming in 2019 due to State circuit breaker property tax rate reduction, we must prepare now and continue to seek the most efficient government possible. We have all heard the oft-quoted phrase "do more with less". Indeed, that's a way of life for most businesses, governments and families. We know how to do that well. But our new goal will be to "do less with less". That means we will rely on data and technology like never before to pinpoint efficiencies, streamline services and solve problems in new ways. For example, the use of GPS and route optimizing software in our plow trucks will make it possible to plow roads in less time, using less fuel and salt and with less manpower while saving wear and tear on our equipment: thus, doing less with less while providing the same great service. This will be our mantra going forward and we will apply similar strategies to all departments. We will leave no stone unturned in our efforts to get more efficient and optimize our services.

Significant Progress on Major Construction Projects - We have made great strides on several major construction projects throughout the City including the Fir-Capital Connector, Mishawaka Avenue Upgrades, the Church Street / Union Street Underpass and the Harrison Road projects just to name a few.

Mishawaka is strong and its strength starts with our hard-working citizens who take pride in this city. It continues with all of us working together to make Mishawaka ever greater. It is promoting the quality of life here to ensure that every citizen has an opportunity to succeed and thrive in a community that is safe and inviting. It is investing in our infrastructure and providing world-class services that support our growth. It is local government that is honest, friendly, open, transparent, responsive and lean.

People often stop me on the street and say "Mayor, there are some great things happening here in Mishawaka but you need to make sure people know about them." Together, we can do a better job of telling our story as we go about making our City better with each decision, fulfilling our responsibilities knowing that good things will come. In every neighborhood, in our service clubs, at our sporting events, in our faith communities, at every opportunity, let's let everyone know about our Mishawaka success story.

I want to thank all of Mishawaka for providing me the opportunity to serve. It is my privilege to work shoulder-to-shoulder with the finest public servants anywhere. Together, we will continue to work to make decisions today with an eye toward future generations. I believe greatness lies ahead of us! May the Princess always look over your shoulder and may God continue to bless you, our citizens and our great City of Mishawaka.



The full State of the City address is available at <http://www.mishawaka.in.gov/soc2015>.



Colorectal Cancer: Are You At Risk? *(cont.)*

Proper screenings can prevent the majority of colorectal cancer occurrences and deaths. Screenings are recommended at age 50 and older for those at average risk and before age 50 for those with a family history of the disease or a history of medical conditions such as adenomatous polyps, chronic inflammatory bowel disease or diabetes.

Screenings can involve looking inside the body using a device called an endoscope. Depending on the type of procedure, you may be fully conscious, sedated or under general anesthesia.

Contact your physician if you are at risk or want more information about colorectal cancer screening. Together, we can reduce the rate of colorectal cancer and save lives.

Send your questions, comments, or concerns to communicator_feedback@mishawaka.in.gov